1609/5005

THE

TRIUMPH OF COMMERCE;

OR,

JOHN O'GAUNT's PROPHECY.

BRITISH MUSEUM
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JUL

THE
TRIUMPH OF COMMERCE;
OR,
JOHN O'GAUNT's PROPHECY:
A
POEM
BY
HENRY SIDDONS, COMEDIAN.

Jam Nova Progenies Cælo demittitur alto.

LANCASTER.
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BRITISH MUSEUM
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DEDICATION.

TO THE SUBSCRIBERS OF THE LANCASTER CANAL.

I am fully convinced that any great or memorable event in Hiſtory, or any undertaking which is deſigned for the benefit of Society, calls for the eulogy of Pens long experienced and well approved of—how can I then, who am almoſt as young in Literature as in Years, preſume to addreſs you? The *Ardor Scribendi* has been my conſtant companion from the Cradle to the Stage; and the Muſes in the hours of Darkneſs and ſolitude have proved a cheering light and my beſt Companions, as I have never debaſed their favors by praiſing vice or upholding ridicule. I hope this token of my admiration will make up by the purety of its

Intention

intention for the brilliancy of its imagery: your exertions will moſt probably enrich poſterity; Poſterity will ſpeak your praiſes much better than I can dare to hope for; but the glow of grateful enthuſiaſm can not be repreſs'd, and what Horace ſo loftily aſcribes to himſelf with the alteration of one perſon will more properly apply to you.

Monumentum ære perennius exegiſtis.

Pardon my intruſion, I ſhall only ſay that the ſucceſs of your ſpirited endeavours cannot be more ardently wiſhed for than by

Your very much obliged

HENRY SIDDONS.

Lancaſter, September, 1793.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The critical reader, will doubtleſs find many Errors, in the following little piece—perhaps the ſubject has fir'd its Author ſo much, that he has forgot the Preciſion due to a regular Poem, but he can only in his defence quote the Britiſh Horace—*Pope.*

Whoever hopes a perfect Work to ſee,
Hopes, what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er ſhall be.

One thing I muſt remark, which is, that perhaps in the Prophecy I have often made uſe of the Preſent Tenſe, when propriety ſhould confine me to the future, but Virgil often affords a Precedent for this, and I therefore humbly ſolicit thoſe indulgences, to which from my youth and inexperience I flatter myſelf I have ſome title.

THE

THE TRIUMPH OF COMMERCE;

OR,

JOHN O'GAUNT's PROPHECY.

NOW o'er the Fields the ſable wings of night,
Had caſt around a ſolitary ſhade,
And o'er the diſtant dell and jocund glade,
Faintly were gleams of ruddy ſplendor ſpread;
When Commerce riſing from her ſtream,
With eye that ſhot a placid beam,
Survey'd Lancaſtria's Pile * by Luna's light,
And reſting on her horn of plenty—ſaid.

* The Scenery is ſuppoſed to be in the ancient domains of John o'Gaunt.

Hail awful ſpot! by mem'ry long revered,
And oft recorded in the Hiſtoric page,
When York's rebellious Sons the ſtandard rear'd,
And with a tide of blood diſgrac'd the Age.

Then fell the Brother by a Brother's ſword;
Then gentle peace fled trembling to the ſky,
And the fierce youth aſtride the Warrior gor'd,
Tore off his Helm, and ſees a Father die.

Then lay the Ploughſhare uſeleſs on the Ground,
The ſoil unturn'd by timely labour ſtood,
For Murder ſtalk'd with Giant ſtep around,
And nothing fed the trembling earth but *blood.*
The Mother ſhriek'd and with diſtraction wild,
Fell at the Ruffian's knees in mad afright;

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Then

Then lifeleſs ſunk, to ſee her helpleſs Child,
* Smiling and pratling—Butcher'd in her ſight.

With Lilly Roſes on their glittering Shields,
Yorks direful faction ſtalk'd along the plain:
The Pond'rous Battle Ax each warrior wields,
And on their creſts fierce nods the dreadful main.

Then Lancaſter's great Sons, the bluſhing roſe,
Bore in their Helms to check rebellious foes,
And through each verdant plain a crimſon channel flows.

And now the Muſe a ſofter meaſure tries,
With plaintive hand ſhe ſtrikes the glowing ſtrings;

And

---

* A very beautiful and energetic deſcription of the horrors of theſe bloody times, is to be found in Shakeſpear's Henry the Sixth, particularly a deſcription and lamentation of a Father who had ſlain his Son.

And to the ſympathetic chord ſhe ſighs,
Mourning the mildeſt, and the beſt of Kings.

See ſee with hands diſtain'd in gore,
The ſenſeleſs rabble in a roar,
Like a whelming deluge ſweep;
They drag the Monarch to his doom,
And in a Dungeon's horrid gloom,
Plunge his ſacred Perſon deep.

With lowering eye and ſullen mien,
The crook back'd Richard with aſpiring mind,
Stalk'd to the walls with mantling Ivy green,
To meditate the miſchief he deſign'd.

Deſpair then groan'd and from her cell,
Malice up roſe with horrid yell,
Lancaſtria's genius trembling ſtood,
And fate unclos'd a Page of blood.

As Richard view'd the walls and crumbling Tow'rs,
Where the baſe herd their ſuff'ring King had brought;
Straight o'er the battlements th' horizon low'rs,
And the hoarſe raven mutter'd like his thought.

Tho' now Lancaſtria's glorious ſun is ſet,
Or all its rays by vapours are oppos'd,
My ſoul can not recount its gainings yet,
Till Henry's eye by death's pale hand is clos'd.

Then ſtarting from the pleaſing dream,
His blood ſhot eys with fury gleam,
With wither'd hand convuls'd by zeal,
He firmly graſp'd the murd'ring ſteel.
Then crept to where the Monarch lay,
Immur'd in darkneſs from the day.
The bloody Ruffian paus'd awhile,
And heard with a malignant ſmile,

The ſuff'ring King employ in pray'r,
The moment to his Country Dear:
While in his eye religion dwelt,
Upon a Crimſon Couch he knelt,
And beamy glories play'd around his head,
As with a Sigh—the Royal Pris'ner ſaid,

" O God! great being I have ſtill addreſs'd,
" 'Tis thine to give, 'tis thine to take away;
" And tho' by cruelty and ſcorn oppreſs'd,
" Thou ſtill canſt light me on the duſky way.

" Tho' from life's roſe the bluſhing leaves are torn,
" And naked now the trembling ſtalk is ſeen;
" Or here and there a ſharp and pointed thorn,
" Seems to recal the thing I once have been.

" But tho' no more I ſhed the rich perfumes,
" Of royal favour on a ſmiling land;

" Yet while the gen'rous bud of *Virtue* blooms,
" More than a throned Monarch I ſhall ſtand.

" Nor let the Rabble ſmile at my diſgrace,
" Heav'n on a King ſuch Pow'r divine has ſhed;
" Has plac'd a royal ſtamp upon his face,
" To ſtrike a lawleſs ſubjects ſoul with dread.

" So when a Lion ſtruggles in the toils,
" And ſtrives his native foreſt to regain;
" The hound with fear and horror back recoils,
" Trembling to view the monarch of the Plain.

" But ſhould I fall oh! grant my fervent pray'r,
" Forgive my foes the horror of my blood;
" Let England all thy choiceſt bleſſings Share,
" My lateſt Sigh ſhall be for England's good.

Then like a Snake with venom'd fang,
The furious monſter on him Sprang,

And plung'd the glitt'ring Dagger in his breaſt *
Lancaſtria's Genius ſaw with joy,
His fleeting ſoul exulting fly,
To meet immortal Glories, and eternal reſt.

The ſhuddering Muſe, now trembles to recall,
The many woes, the Murders that befell,
When Richard graſping at the royal ball,
Made England's realms an univerſal Hell.

Then fled the virtues and the poliſh'd arts,
And diſcord rear'd her flaming torch on high,
Aſtrea from the gore ſtain'd earth departs,
And fury roſe with wild and blood ſhot eye.

He who Lancaſtria's Sons with malice ſought,
And dimm'd their glorious ſun with wily care,

Now

* Shakeſpear in his Richard the third makes Henry fall by the hand of Gloſter, which tho' not exactly conformable to Hiſtorical truth, conducts the Fable much more purely; than if the Murder had been executed by any other hand.

Now found his Glory, with repentance taught,
And conſcience Vulture-like was ever there:
And as the beamy gem his Crown adorns,
It only proved a Crown replete with thorns.

As to his lips oblivious draughts he bore,
To drown the ſhriek that conſcience oft would howl,
Suſpicion ſoon his frantic fancy tore,
And mingled Poiſon in the ſparkling bowl.

The murder'd infants of the royal race,
Oft ſtood before him clad in robes divine,
And pointing to their wounds, each placid face,
Beaming with grief, would ſay—*theſe deeds are thine.*

Then from his Couch the ſtarting King would leap,
Fancy to madneſs drove his ſpirits now—
On his thril'd bones, the trembling fleſh would creep,
And dews of ſweat ſtand gliſt'ning on his brow.

Suſpicion drove him to deſpotic deeds,
And every hour was heard a piercing groan;
Dragg'd from his home, th' unconſcious victim bleeds,
And none cou'd fairly call their lives their own.

The Ghoſt of *Gaunt* in armor clad aroſe,
And ſtalking near his Tow'rs—alas how chang'd!
His manly viſage big with ſtrugling woes,
Under the Oaks, and mould'ring Tow'rs he rang'd.

When from the Turret toll'd the ſolemn bell,
Fix'd for awhile in ſilent grief he gaz'd,
And as it's ſounds were borne along the vale,
His ſtreaming eyes to heav'n in grief were rais'd;

But ſoon the tears were dry'd,
Like the mad Prieſteſs of the Delphic God,
He ſtalk'd with rapture o'er the ſward,
Again his Caſtle eyed,

And

And rapture in his eye,
The Moon and conſcious Stars alone,
Who on his favourite Turrets ſhone,
Hear'd him with ſolemn voice record this Prophecy.

THE PROPHECY.

NOT long, my Sons, ſhall rapine waſte your ſtores,
Nor deſolation bare the ſmiling plain,
Plenty ſhall ſoon your verdure loſt reſtore,
And Ceres ſcatter wide the golden grain.

My ancient ſplendor ſhortly ſhall revive,
(The fates uncloſe th' irrevocable page)
On theſe lone plains ſhall ven'trous Commerce thrive,
And ſcatter bleſſings on a future age.

The Ploughs which long have been to Swords transform'd,
To plunge in men the deep, the deadly wound,
Back to its firſt its genuine temper form'd,
Shall only furrow, up the teeming ground.

Soon ſhall a youth of origin divine,
Bid diſcord and her hated triumph ceaſe,
The bluſhing and the pallid roſe entwine,
And to my War worn ſons reſtore their peace.

Like two bright Stars the gen'rous pair will ſhine,
Lancaſtria's glory Henry,* ſhall regain;
Elizabeth with tenderneſs divine,
Shall plenty peace and happineſs maintain.

Him

* Henry the ſeventh, the Conqueror of Richard married Elizabeth the Daughter of Edward the fourth.

Him ſhall a youth of mental ſtrength ſucceed,
In form uncouth and of unpoliſh'd mind,
Yet quick to act, and once *conceiv'd*; the deed,
In Execution ſhall outſtrip the wind.

He to religion ſhall the glory give,*
To make her face aſſume a livelier hue,
The right, Divine, of liberty ſhall live,
Each as he *thinks*, his Worſhip ſhall *purſue*.

E'en the burnt Indian, if with fervent zeal,
He hails the roſy tints of bluſhing morn,
The great extent of Heavenly grace will feel,
And rays of virtue light the path forlorn.

Then

* To Henry the eighth are Engliſhmen indebted for a liberty of conſcience, unknown to other Nations, and which is the real Eſſence of *freedom*.

Then ſhall a female, of a manly mind,
In War and Peace the Britiſh annals grace,
Then ſhall the ſteel of valour be *refin'd*,
And ſmiles of rapture beam on *learnings* face.

Then ſhall a Bard, bleſs'd with a muſe of fire,
Bid Albions white rocks, echo to his lyre,
* Now like a roaring torrent ſweep along,
Now ſooth, now charm, with his exulting Song,
Now melt in pity, Thunder now—in rage,
And to athenian horrors raiſe the ſtage;
And future bards ſhall conſecrate the tide,
Where Avons Silver Waters gently glide,
True wit and humour ſhall combine in him,
The favourite child of tenderneſs and whim,

The

* See a moſt beautiful ode of Horrace, on Pindar's Poems.

The ſervile trammels of the Schools deſpiſe,
Charm without rules, and without art ſurprize,
His toil laborious ſhall his Miſtreſs crown,
And Wond'ring *Nature* call him all her *own.*
The haughty Spaniard envious of her pow'r,
Shall to the main, a ſwarm of Tyrants ſend,
Bid Torturing flames, o'er Britiſh Freedom low'r,
And Racks and Wheels, the free born ſpirit lend.

Albion from it's frowning rock,
Shall view unaw'd the diſtant ſhock,
See where from the diſtant ſhore,
Britiſh Heroes, thickly pour;
* Raleighs Powers in thunder ſpeak,
Hark! the drowning wretches ſhriek,

Shatter'd

* Sir Walter, one of the firſt Writers and Admirals of his time.

Shatter'd ſee, th' Armada flies,
The wounded air is rent with cries,
Blood has fluſh'd the raging main,
Back to their homes they turn again,
Fall'n, Fall'n, the Creſt of Haughty Spain;
Old Albions Genius at their ruin ſmiles,
And all the world reveres, the QUEEN of ISLES.

Plenty ſhall then her richeſt ſtores diffuſe,
And when the race of Brunſwick mounts the Throne,
Heaven ſhall on Britain pour its choiceſt dews,
And Peace and Commerce mark her for their own.

Then ſhall a *Chatham* in his Country's cauſe,
Bid with his praiſe a Nations limits ring,
And yet unmov'd by cenſure or applauſe,
Maintain, his faith, his Country and his King.

And ſee the Golden age again in bloom, *
Triumph ye Brittons, ſtrike th' exulting chord,
For a new Offspring from the Skies will come, §
Fix'd in their Sov'reigns heart, and he by them ador'd.

See the third *George's* ſtar in ſplendor riſe,
See *Chatham's* offspring like a Phœnix ſoar,
See *Rodney* mount his Glories to the Skies,
See Brunſwick's race—behold—and God Adore.

Whilſt in a neighb'ring Land confuſion reigns,
And ignorance and atheiſm bind,
Aſſaſſins lurk, in Council, Camps and Plains,
And devaſtations triumph o'er mankind.

(Such were the ſcenes ‡ which late this Country tore,
When the two Roſes rais'd the murd'ring Sword,

* Redeunt ſaturnia regna *Virgil.*
§ Jam nova &c. *ibid.*
‡ See the begining of the Poem.

When ev'ry threſhold bluſh'd with clotted gore,
And Royalty no refuge could afford:)

England unmov'd, the jarring ſhock ſhall view,
Its Fame, its Commerce, and its laws maintain,
And Quench the envious flame which diſcord blew,
And Hell firſt kindled in the mind of PAINE. †

Rous'd by a Monarchs* ſuff'rings ſee they throng,
A Prince § for Glory quits the lap of eaſe,
Fierce to redreſs an injur'd Sovereigns wrong,
He quits a blooming Bride to brave the Seas.

Unhappy

† A character, that will ever be renown'd in the records of infamy, his works tho' abſurd and contemptable, ſhould however be preſerv'd, to frighten even vice, by ſhewing it how hideous it may appear.

* The much lamented Louis the xvi.

§ The Heroic Duke of York, whoſe valor draws from their deſcendants the rapturous applauſe their forefathers beſtow'd on Edward the Black Prince, in the Plains of Creſſy.

Unhappy Land! by Man and Heav'n abhor'd,
Soon ſhall you crumble to your native duſt,
Soon ſhall they tremble who have ſnap'd the chord,
That binds humanity in mutual truſt.

But oh! this reign, ſhall ſtill to me be dear,
On *Lancaſter* its bleſſings it will ſhed,
Commerce ſhall fix her Golden Empire here,
And plenty revel in her yellow bed.

Then ſhall theſe ſtraw built ſheds where Soldiers reſt,
Become the ſeats of opulence and eaſe;
Thoſe thatched huts where now the warrior's bleſt,
Shall raiſe their heads as lux'rys ſelf ſhall pleaſe.

The lonely Fiſherman now haunts thoſe ſhores,
Which then ſhall teem with other Nations wealth;
Then ſhall my ſons well ply their ſails and oars,
And induſtry ſhall gain them—Credit—Health.

Each active genius then its force ſhall uſe,
When Commerce lingers for ſome freſh reſource;
Endeavours ſhall a general wiſh diffuſe,
And a CANAL ſhall wind its meandring courſe.

The plenteous boſom of kind Earth once broke,
Thall open all her ſecret hidden ſtore;
Her minerals oft, and oft the hardy rock,*
Shall by this Cut be where 'tis wanted, bore.

Commerce ſhall then her cheering wings expand,
And Lancaſter with double luſtre ſhine;
Affluence ſhall beam on every track of Land,
And ev'ry Town encreaſes on the Line.

This

* Alluding to the Carriage of Coal, Lime-Stone, Slate, Flags, and Free-ſtone upon the Canal, the greateſt part of the Country wanting moſt of thoſe Articles.

This boggy Marſh which now I dimly ſee,
And yon dark Moors which barren look behind—
Thoſe Sands which now are covered by the Sea,
A prey to Floods, to Rivers and the Wind;

Shall to the Plough their grateful natures yield,
Pleas'd when you harrow up the barren Soil;
Shall in a Cottage, Garden or a Field,
Amply repay the bold projectors toil.

But ah! my Sons, think not theſe bleſſings come,
Down from kind Heav'n without your lab'ring hand;
Care and perplexities muſt be the doom,
Of thoſe who bravely dare attempt command.

Oft very oft ſelf intereſt will you mock;
(Short ſighted Man each future good oft thwarts)
Oft will your lib'ral ſpirits feel the ſhock,
Of ſtupid Ign'rance and of narrow hearts.

The Mind intent its purpoſe to purſue,
The Heart that knows not wrong, and fears no ſhame,
Shall in thoſe days be deſtin'd to a few,
Who ſhall accompliſh what the fates ordain.

But oft a cloudy morning will ariſe;
A noon-tide Storm will often intervene—
Which paſſing o'er, diſcovers milder ſkies,
All nature bleſt—all hail the changed Scene.

Unmindful of the thoughtleſs gen'ral voice,
Whoſe tongues opinions give without a Cauſe;
Purſue the great the inevitable choice,
And a CANAL will gain from all applauſe.

Thro' this the Riches of the World ſhall glide,
From this ſhall oft the gently ſwelling Sails,
Roll rocking Veſſels thro' the ſilver tide,
While fav'ring fortune blows propitious Gales.

Then

Then on the ſtream the Worlds beſt treaſures borne,
Shall pay the great inventors for their pains;
No more ſhall induſtry inactive mourn,
But fix her ſeat upon Lancaſtria's plains.

The Indian Treaſures rolling down ſhall pour;
And China's riches bleſs Lancaſtria's Fair;
From Aſia's Cities and the Turkiſh ſhore,
The brighteſt bleſſings ſhall the Merchant bear.

O ſpot to nature and to Venus dear!
The future youth with rapturous applauſe,
Shall hail the powers of blooming Beauty here,
Whoſe ſmiles ſhall ſtring the nerve to glory's cauſe:

Nature ſhall deck them with her choiceſt care,
With real excellence their Souls refine,
Teach them at mis'rys call to drop the tear,
And in relieving, beam with ſmiles divine.

Hail

Hail Happy Sons! be virtuous and be wiſe!
Remember your Forefather's lateſt pray'r,
But the Shrill Cock now calls me to the ſkies,
Where, as on Earth, my conſtant zeal you ſhare.
He ſpoke—and to the Caſtle turn'd his head,
Took his laſt gaze—and from the ſcene FOR EVER FLED.

FINIS.

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